

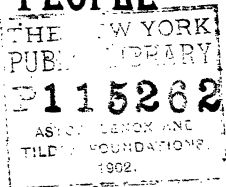
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TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AN APPEAL

BY

G. APACIBLE.



God Almighty knows how unjust is the war which the Imperial arms have provoked and are maintaining against our unfortunate country! If the honest American patriots could understand the sad truth of this declaration, we are sure they would, without the least delay, stop this unspeakable horror. And, that they may have a just understanding of it, we entreat them to hear our voice, to meditate on our exhortations and to weigh our statements against the misrepresentations under which Imperialism seeks to conceal its designs. Turn not away from our prayer, Americans, but listen, and give judgment according to reason and conscience.

We, the Filipinos, are a civilized, progressive and peace-loving people. Many impartial writers and speakers have testified that we are advanced in civilization, that we are capable of improvement, that many of our people for two centuries have enjoyed the advantages of university education, that the number of illiterates among our people is small, and that as artists, scientists, magistrates, generals and dignitaries of the Church, the sons of the Filipinos, have distinguished themselves greatly and have achieved many positions of eminence, especially so in Spain. That we are progressive, was well shown by the conduct of our whole country when, at the time of the capitulation of the city of Manila,

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the inhabitants of our islands, supposing themselves to have entered upon a career of national independence that was to be assured to them by the United States Government. instead of abandoning themselves to any revolutionary fever and excess, established with careful thought and scrupulous regard for justice a prudent government which respected all rights created legitimately; they convoked a Congress whose legislative work has not been justly criticised by anybody; they re-organized the administrative machinery which had been disturbed by recent struggles: telegraphs, railroads and means of communication began to work regularly; we had adopted the electric light in some of our towns; and we had established a new university, four high and several primary schools. In brief, the new nation had entered upon a path of progress which already promised a bright future. All this progress the Imperialists have disturbed; all this progress have they destroyed.

For proof that we love peace, we ask you to remember the story of our relations with Spain. For three hundred years our country has been at the mercy of Spanish domination; we were the subjects of that monarchy; the government of that nation denied us any voice in the enactment of remedial legislation: they denied us representation in the Spanish Cortes. They allowed themselves to be directed by the most reactionary elements. and took counsel chiefly from the friars who sought to estrange the mother country from us and to deny us the blessings of liberty, so that they might the more completely exploit us at their will. They denied us freedom of the press, restricted the right of peaceable assembly and violated the security of our homes. They created the so-called administrative process (*expedientes gubernativos*); so that, often, without hearing and without trial the most peaceful citizen was snatched from his house and condemned to the miseries of banishment. In brief, the Spanish government, whose despotic cruelty American Imperialism now imitates,

and in some respects surpasses, denied to us many of the liberties which you were already enjoying when, under pretext of oppression, you revolted against British domination.

Notwithstanding these great wrongs we submitted quietly, confining our protests to earnest prayers for reparation; such was our love of peace. Only when we became convinced that our requests were absolutely disregarded, that the most worthy officials were removed from office, even those of eminent character, when it was made known that they had manifested even a slight sympathy for us, when we had lost every hope of peaceful remedy and all faith in the oft promised liberal reforms, only then it was that the armed protest, the Philippine revolution, the most justifiable of all revolutions, began. It was an uprising void of every feeling of hatred and revenge toward Spain, the country that we respected and loved; it was a revolt against her bad government, just as we now revolt, not against America, whose power and greatness we recognize, and whose justice we still hope to see proven, but against her unworthy rulers. Those who tell you that we are an adventurous and seditious people, ready to go to war at the least pretext, basely deceive you in this as in many other calumnies invented by the Imperialists. If, yesterday, we fought against Spain, and, to-day, are resisting your powerful arms, even though sure to be vanquished, it is because we have been forced as a last resort to an unequal and bloody war for the attainment of an aspiring people's legitimate ambitions. Thus we can repeat proudly and with the firmness of one who carries the truth on his lips and in his heart, that if our character and culture entitle us to independence, still more do we show ourselves entitled to it by the high motives which have always inspired our resistance. Why, then, do you deny us liberty? Why, forgetful of all your history and the noble precepts of your illustrious forefathers, are you fighting against the cause of Independence, of Progress and of Justice, which is our cause? What

has come to pass between you and us that should cause you to permit this incredible and monstrous war to be waged against us?

When you declared war against Spain you proclaimed to the world at large that you had appealed to arms only in order to free oppressed peoples; and when your flag waved before the coasts of the Philippines on powerful vessels which easily destroyed the weak fleet of the enemy, it was an emblem of liberty then. Your diplomatic representatives invited the most famous of our Filipino leaders, Hon. E. Aguinaldo, to an offensive alliance against those whom you represented to us as a "common enemy," in order that by vanquishing them, we might achieve our aspirations for peace and happiness. It was then that your idol, Admiral Dewey, and your distinguished generals, Merritt and Anderson, treated us as friends and allies, saying sincerely that we were fit for independence, even more so, as the admiral asserted, than the Cubans to whom you have with equity promised to give it. It was then that the flag of the new Philippine nation waved in the shadow of the Stars and Stripes at Manila Bay. It was then that the independence of the Philippines was proclaimed at Cavite, within range of your cannons, without any opposition, and in almost the very words of your immortal Declaration. It was then that your soldiers hailed the new nation, while ours were cheering the American liberators. It was then, to save your cause, since you had assured us that your cause embraced our freedom, that the Filipinos gave their blood for you in your fight against a valiant and obstinate enemy, and at the same time placed in your reach all available resources and aid. You were at that moment almost at the point of breaking into hostilities with another nation which had manifested her sympathy for Spain by attempting to bar at Subig Bay the course of what you yourselves had called "an army of liberation." That was the hour of the beautiful fiction: now we seem to have come to the time of the bitter reality, the cruel disenchant-

ment. Then we were received and treated as allies; now we are scourged back into the mountains and denied every right except that of fighting the very flag in whose beneficent shadow we had expected to find freedom and happiness.

From the outset our country took sides with the United States in the war with Spain, and we marched proudly with your sons as comrades in arms, as soldiers in the same cause, to victory. At all times during that war, and for months afterward, the civil, military and naval authorities of the United States caused us to hope for Independence. Papers and pamphlets advocating this ideal were published in Manila under the protection of the United States authorities: with their consent the revolutionary army had been conquering the Spanish positions and establishing in them provincial governments dependent on that of the Philippine Republic. America was then a great republic, releasing the Cubans and the Filipinos from the iron grasp of an imperial government and conducting them to emancipation and freedom; and our people hailed the Stars and Stripes as an emblem of freedom, as the token of liberty for the living and the badge of honor for the patriots dead. With renewed energy, with proud alacrity, with fearless determination they pressed on, side by side with your noble sons, to the end. What reward did we get? Did the expected freedom come to us? No! As a requital for our sacrifices and as a reward for our loyalty, subjugation is offered to us instead of freedom. We may have a colonial government of the United States, administered in a foreign language, instead of the colonial government of Spain, which, at least, was administered in a language already known to us and which we have made ours. We are to have a colonial government which will deny us the citizenship of its nation. In spite of their imperialistic tendencies, the Spanish government never went so far as to deny us citizenship!

When, on a day of sad recollections, we declined to accept this shame, when we protested against this

iniquitous ingratitude, then the guns of the United States were turned upon us; we were denounced as traitors and rebels; you destroyed the homes to which you had been welcomed as honored guests, killing thousands of those who had been your allies, mutilating our old men, our women and our children, and watering with blood and strewing with ruins the beautiful soil of our Fatherland. Behold, therefore, Americans, and consider not only our right to independence but what your conduct has been, and what your plain duty is towards us in good faith, and then judge, in view of these antecedents, whether the crusade of extermination which the Imperialists have inaugurated against our unfortunate country is a worthy one, whether it is just, and whether it is in the least degree excusable.

These and only these are the true terms of the simple problem. Do not give ear to the specious arguments of those who, in order to excuse a political crime and in order to disguise their greed and covetousness, tell you the contrary by means of assertions whose falseness is as great as the bad faith of their author. They tell you that we are incapable of self-government, as if the accomplished facts had not proven the contrary; and as if, also, all the Americans who had calmly judged us, previous to this war of conquest, had not unanimously asserted otherwise. They assure you that there exist deep divisions among us and that the withdrawal of the American troops would create anarchy and misgovernment in our country, as if it were not evident that the most complete order prevailed there until the Imperial troops had, with their unjust war, brought confusion. They tell you that the government of the Philippine Republic had never been recognized by the whole country. This is a manifest falsehood, because it had been recognized even by the Mohammedans in the South, whom the Imperialists, their friends and allies, boast so much of having reduced to submission; and by the mountain races of Luzon, who always refused to recognize the Spanish Gov-

ernment and who will do the same to the American Government. The Filipino Government is the only one which can conciliate and redeem them, for in that government only have they confidence—a success for civilization which Imperialism could never accomplish. They assert that the existence of these mountain races makes the Philippine Independence impossible. This is an absurd assertion, which would be equal to maintaining that you are incapable of self-government simply because there are Indians on your soil in a proportion almost equal to that which the Ingorrotes, Aetas, etc., represent among us. They mislead you with the idea that because the Tagalogs, the Visayos, the Ilocanos, etc., speak different dialects, it is not feasible for us to constitute a national unity. This is an objection of gross ignorance which forgets that in the most civilized European nations people speak different dialects and even different languages, as in the highly civilized Switzerland; it is also a sophistical objection which overlooks the fact that in all the provinces of the Archipelago, in the Tagal, the Visayan, and the Ilocos provinces, etc., whose inhabitants are of the same ethnical condition and culture, the only language officially spoken is the Spanish. They allege that the majority of the Filipinos are in favor of the American sovereignty, and that they would rather be colonials of America than be independent. This is a base falsehood, which belies the fact of the thousands of soldiers which the Imperialists have had to put on the islands, and of the regime of military tyranny, more terrible than was ever known before by us, of which they were compelled to avail themselves, imprisoning thousands of honest people, suppressing serious newspapers, and other endless abuses against all law, in order to smother the cries for independence. They also tell you that we were the aggressors in the present war, as if it were not evident how much we have done in order to prevent the outbreak of hostilities with which we were daily provoked, and how many times we proposed a cessa-

tion in the fight in order that we may come to an agreement, a demand which your rulers have always refused to grant us. They further tell you that our country has great and unexploited fishes and that with it America would gain. This is a new deception of Imperialism, because such treasures, even the mines, have already been carefully exploited by Spaniards, Germans, and English, and they never obtained the marvellous success of which Imperialism now dreams; on the contrary, the record of these exploitations shows more failure than success. They go on to say that there are in our country rich lands to distribute and cultivate. To this the deceived American immigrants who, believing such promises, shall go and succumb to the rigors of the climate, so fatal to their race, will answer accursing those who made them leave their rich and habitable land. That the highest interests of Christianity demand the retention of the Islands, is another deception, because if our subjugation becomes a reality, we could never forget how much religious fanaticisms have had to do with it, and our present Christian belief would stagger and perhaps we would look with distrust on the creeds of our subjugators. Finally, the Imperialists say that God trusted in their hands the government of the future destinies of the Filipines, as if the Supreme Spirit could have been incarnated in the gold of the twenty millions of dollars which were paid to Spain, and in the steel of the quick-firing guns which are mutilating the unfortunate Filipinos.

No, do not listen to the false assertions of the Imperialists, listen only to the voice of reason and justice. Heed not the suggestions of those who pretend to excite your national self-love and your innermost feelings, in order that you may convert yourselves into docile instruments of their cupidity and ambition, of their immoralities and scandals which are peculiar to every colonial administration, and which have already dishonored the until now immaculate name of America and her foreign policy. Do not be deceived by false charges, nor allured by false prom-

ises. Give judgment without hypocrisy and without self-deception. On the one hand your honor and your glorious traditions are calling upon you to accord to us our rightful and well-earned independence. On the other hand the distorted dreams of avarice, the dark conspiracies of greed and remorseless ambition, nurses of Imperialism throughout all time, these counsel you to uphold the war of subjugation which your rulers, but not your people, have authorized and forced upon us. Choose, then sons of Washington, of Jefferson and of Lincoln, between these two alternatives: Freedom for the hapless peoples who are in your power, and thus, under God's just laws, the recompense to you of a larger freedom for yourselves, or, tyranny and destruction for your struggling but helpless victims, whose wrongs the Great Ruler of all will in due time avenge by the mournful destruction of your own liberties. Shall it be generosity, or colonial greed? Shall it be right, or wrong? Give ear to your own conscience, and we are sure you will incline yourselves toward mercy, toward justice, and toward the only honorable course that will restore peace to our ransacked homes and to our devastated fields, stopping at once and forever this horrible war which has already cost so much in treasure and blood, and which, if not abandoned, will yet cost much more, because our resolution is fixed: Liberty or death; independence or annihilation.

Why do the Imperialists wish to subjugate us? What do they intend to do with us? Do they expect us to surrender—to yield our inalienable rights, our homes, our properties, our lives, our future destinies, to the absolute control of the United States? What would you do with our nine millions of people? Would you permit us to take part in your elections? Would you concede to us the privilege of sending Senators and Representatives to your Congress? Would you allow us to erect one or more federal states? Or, would you tax us without representation? Would you change your tariff laws so as to admit our products

free of duty and in competition with the products of your own soil? And thus would you allow the American trusts to utilize our cheap labor in the manufacture of goods that would compete with the products of your own factories? Would you permit the trusts to bottle up our people to subserve their own ends, depriving us even of those liberties which you are enjoying? Would you admit our artisans, mechanics, laborers, and servants to take employment in your country on an equal footing with American citizens, Indians and Negroes? Would you allow us to prohibit Chinese immigration? Would you permit us to retain our own language and not force us to adopt yours? Would you let us elect our own local officers? Would you allow us to share your offices, your honors and your privileges? And, as for the saloons (which were almost unknown in Manila before) would you allow them to go on multiplying at the appalling rate at which their number has increased there within the past two years? Would you allow the lands in the Philippines to remain at all untaxed, as formerly, simply because some religious corporations have acquired enormous and fraudulent properties in them? Would you remove your American soldiery and permit us to create an army of our own? Or, if you were determined to maintain a powerful army and fleet in order to protect your newly acquired "property" from foreign ambitions, and from our natural and perpetual anxieties for liberty, would you do this solely at your own expense, because the revenues of a poor country like ours could not do so? You who so ardently protest against the destruction by England of two small republics which challenged her to war, would you continue to remain indifferent whilst your rulers are engaged in annihilating a weaker republic which is much more helpless than those of South Africa, and which, far from declaring war against you, was your obliging friend, your successful ally? What would you do with the Philippines and with the Filipinos if you refused to allow them to become a new American

state, if you refused to allow them to enjoy your citizenship?

Imperialism knows not how to answer these questions. It is inspired only by greed, by a vile thirst for gold and by the lust of spoliation. But, ever misled by its ruthless impulses, it cannot determine which would be its better plan, which should be its settled purpose for the future, or how far it may safely indulge its insatiable appetites. For the dilemma is inexorable: either the retention of the Philippine Islands, if it is realized with a noble purpose, will result in great harm to your industries and your commerce, or, it will become a system of merciless and shameful colonial spoliation which will forever blot out the honor of whatever there is that is lofty and noble in your history. Can it be possible, sons of America, that you will allow us to become subjects or slaves? Should this happen, how will you reconcile it with the wise and noble principles set forth in your Declaration of Independence: "That all men are created equal: that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." Will you transform these beautiful and honorable sentiments into specious deceptions, fraudulent promises, and high-sounding but hollow words? No! You cannot belie your whole history. You cannot tolerate the violation which Imperialism is so evidently working against your most venerable and fundamental principles. Until Congress succeeds in redressing the illegal aggressions of which we are the victims, and shall suppress these violations of reason, of solemn contracts and of the elementary conceptions of gratitude, we shall rely upon and appeal to the high sense of justice which has hitherto so honorably characterized the free American conscience. We do not believe you will allow us to be enslaved; it would be a dishonor to yourselves.

Influence, then, as soon as possible your legislators and rulers to give us self-government, which by right belongs to us, and peace will be restored immediately, to your benefit and ours, ending the now incessant and fruitless bloodshed entailed upon us by the present war.

We are ready to make peace, and, in order to facilitate this end, we propose:

First: That we will pay back to the United States the twenty million dollars paid by them to Spain.

Second: That the most amicable and perpetual commercial relations shall exist between us for our mutual benefit and for the greater progress of our country.

Third: That we will grant to the United States whatever space is reasonably necessary for coaling stations outside of our established cities.

Fourth: That we will not allow monopolies of any kind in the Islands, and that we will give to your citizens all the guarantees and protection accorded to our own citizens for the security of life and property.

Fifth: That we are ready to entertain whatever terms you may desire for yourselves, so long as they do not infringe upon our individual and political liberties, or upon the integrity of our nationality.

After these offers, it only remains that you, the free citizens of America, for the glory of your name throughout the world and for the honor of your flag, shall do justice. Thus shall the hands of your noble sons be no longer stained with innocent blood. Thus shall it not be said that the vile inspirations of greed have banished from your hearts those lofty traditions of liberty and philanthropy which you have inherited from your honest forefathers.

Toronto, June, 1900.

For the Central Filipino Committee,

G. APACIBLE.